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A Sumerian Source of the Fourth and Fifth Chapters of Genesis

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FOR some years scholars have held that the list of antediluvian kings contained in the fragments of Berossos were probably the names of the patriarchs of Gen. 5 in a different form. Hommel¹ and Sayce² have both attempted to show how the two lists were different translations of the same Babylonian words.

These efforts were not fully successful. Some elements resisted all the solvents that could be turned upon them. At last, I believe, the Sumerian original has come to light in a tablet from Nippur in the University Museum in Philadelphia. Dr. Poebel has published³ the tablet and translated⁴ it, but has overlooked what seems to the writer its most interesting relations. He takes the names of all its kings to refer to monarchs who lived after the flood. In his view they are different from the names in the list of Berossos. The colophon at the end of the list, however, gives no intimation that the time covered by the tablet was dated from the flood. It gives the reader the impression that the chronology given went back to the dim beginnings of history.

¹ *PSBA.*, XV, 243—246.

² *Expository Times*, X, 353.

³ Historical and Grammatical Texts: Vol. V of the "Publications of the Babylonian Section" of the University Museum, Philadelphia, 1914, No. 2.

⁴ *Historical Texts*, Vol. IV of the same series, Philadelphia, 1914, pp. 73—140.

The names and reigns of the kings that concern us are as follows:—

Galumum: reigned 900 years;
 Zugagib: reigned 840 years;
 Aripī (or Ademê⁵), son of Mashgag, 720 years;
 Etana, the shepherd, who went to heaven, who subdued all
 lands: reigned 635 years;
 Pilikam⁶: reigned 350 years;
 Enmenunna: reigned 611 years;
 Melamkish: reigned 900 years;
 Barsalnunna: reigned 1200 years;
 Meskingashir: ruled 325 years;
 Enmeirgan: ruled 420 years;
 Lugalbanda: ruled 1200 years;
 Dumuzi: ruled 100 years;
 Gilgamesh: ruled 126 years.

In addition to these the name Mes(?)zamu appears, but the number of his years is lost.

As Poebel has recognized, the first two names are animal names, Galumum meaning "lamb" and Zugagib "scorpion". The human names, accordingly, begin with A-ri-pi, which may also be read A-de-mê⁷. When taken over into Hebrew Ademê was naturally assimilated in spelling to the Hebrew word אדם. In Sumerian the words "to heaven" are AN-ŠU, also read AN-KU. *An-ku* taken over into Hebrew would give us the etymology of Enoch, a name that has never been satisfactorily explained. Sumerian words which begin with a vowel sometimes take a guttural at the beginning on coming into Hebrew. Thus the Sumerian AŠ-TAN, "one", Semitic Babylonian "ištin", comes into Hebrew as עשתי (Jer. 1 3 and elsewhere).

⁵ See Barton, *Origin of Babylonian Writing*, numbers 93²⁰ and 339.

⁶ May also be read Welikam or Melikam.

⁷ Poebel reads the name *Arpi*, apparently because in another fragmentary tablet he thinks the name is written *Arbum*, but both Poebel's copy and the photograph of the first tablet favor the reading *A-ri-pi*. The writer has endeavored to settle the matter by collating both tablets, but both have unfortunately crumbled too much to make collation decisive.

It is well known that 𐎶 frequently passes into 𐎶⁸, so that on this etymology the spelling 𐎶𐎶𐎶 is fully accounted for. The lengths of the reigns of these Babylonian kings do not correspond with the length of the lives of the patriarchs as given in Genesis, but it happens that the 635 years of the reign of Etana become the 365 years of the life of Enoch by the transposition of the first two digits!

The translation of Enoch, or the "going to heaven" of Etana is a theme which is elaborated in the Etana myth, where Etana mounted to heaven on the back of an eagle⁹. Unfortunately the tablet containing the myth is broken before the upward voyage was completed, so that we are in ignorance as to how, according to the Babylonian tale, the attempt succeeded.

Another possible derivation may be found in a suggestion made by more than one scholar that the Euedorochochos of Berossos (a name which in his list is found in place of Enoch) is a corruption of Enmeduranki, who is said in a ritual text to have been king of Sippar¹⁰. In the king-lists the dynasties of Kish and Agade (the older name of Sippar) are counted the same. Enmeduranki, like Etana, was, accordingly, a king of Kish. Enmeduranki means "the hero who binds together heaven and earth", and was a most appropriate epithet of Etana. One may hazard the guess that the two were the same. If so, the name Enoch may have been derived in accord with the phonetic laws already pointed out, from AN-KI, the Sumerian for "heaven and earth", the last two elements of Enmeduranki.

Again Enmenunna may be translated into Semitic Babylonian as "Mutu-elu". Mutu means both "man" and "priest", or some high official¹¹, Poebel has shown that En-me is the designation of a certain kind of priest¹². The translation given

⁸ See Brockelmann, *Vergleichende Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, I, § 55, b, a.

⁹ See *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, VI, 115.

¹⁰ Zimmern, *Ritualtafeln für den Wahrsager*, No. 24, 11.

¹¹ Muss-Arnolt, *Handwörterbuch*, 619, 620, and Knudtzon, *El-Amarna Tafeln*, No. 55, 43.

¹² *Historical Texts*, p. 114.

above is accordingly justified. It may also have been rendered by the one word *amêlu*. A Hebrew translator might also have rendered it by Enosh, placing אֱנוֹשׁ in contrast with אָדָם.

The next one in the list, Pi-li-kam¹³, translated into Semitic becomes *Ina-uzni-erešu*, "with intelligence to build", or in one word, *ummanu*, "artificer". Is it an accident that Kenan means "artificer"?

Melamkish gives us Lamech (לֹמֶךְ) by the simple wearing away of the first and last radicals of Melamkish (מִלְמַכֵּשׁ)¹⁴.

Barsalnunna translated into Semitic Babylonian becomes "*Šithu-elu*"¹⁵; Seth is the transfer of the first element of this into Hebrew, the final radical having worn away, or having been accidentally omitted.

Meskingashir, literally translated into Semitic Babylonian, is *Mutu-ša-etlu*, "the man who is lord". The accidental omission of a single letter would make it *Mutu-ša-elu*, "the man who is exalted". Methusalah is the exact equivalent of this expressed in Hebrew letters.

Enmeirgan becomes, when translated into Semitic, *Mutu-šalal-eqla*¹⁶, and Mahalalel is a much closer transfer of the first two elements of this to Hebrew than are Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Merodach-baladan, and Evil-merodach of the names *Sin-akhi-irba*, *Ashur-akhi-iddina*, *Marduk-apal-iddin*, and

¹³ The sign *kam* Poebel failed to recognize. It is No. 364 א of Barton's *Origin and Development of Babylonian Writing*. It is sometimes employed in other texts instead of other signs which had the values *ka* or *kam*. Here it is used for sign No. 357 of the work referred to.

¹⁴ Langdon makes the suggestion (*Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man*, Philadelphia, 1915, p. 56, n. 7) that Lamech is the Sumerian *Lumĥa*, an epithet of the Babylonian god Ea as the patron of music. A more plausible suggestion is that Lamech is a corruption of a king's name as suggested above, and after it was corrupted it was confused with the name of the Sumerian god *Lamga*, the constructive god, whose emblem was the sign for carpenter (see Barton, work cited, No. 503).

¹⁵ Meissner, *Ideogramme*, 1139.

¹⁶ See Barton, *Origin of Babylonian Writing*, No. 229 18.

Amel-Marduk. Finally Dumuzi means "son of life", or "living son" and Jared means "descendant"¹⁷.

The equivalent of Noah does not appear in this list, but there is no doubt that he was Ziugiddu, otherwise called Utnapishtim of the Babylonian accounts of the flood.

We have then the following equivalents, three of which are Hebrew translations of Sumerian names, three, transfers into Hebrew of the whole or of parts of Semitic Babylonian equivalents of these Sumerian names, three of which are transfers to Hebrew of portions of a Sumerian original, and one of which Noah, is still inexplicable. The correspondences, then, are

Sumerian	Semitic Babylonian	Hebrew
Adêmê		Adam
Barsalnunna	Šithu-elû	Seth
Enmenunna	Mutu-elû or <i>amêlu</i>	Enosh
Pilikam	Ina-uzni-erešu or <i>ummanu</i>	Kenan
Enmeirgan	Mutu-šalal-gan	Mahalalel
Dumuzi	Apal-napišti	Jared
Etana		Enoch
Meskingashir	Mutu-ša-etlu (elû)	Methusalah
Melamkish ¹⁸		Lamech
Ziugiddu		Noah

It may be urged as an objection to the derivation of the names of these patriarchs from those of this Babylonian tablet, that the number of kings is much greater than the number of patriarchs, even though the tablet is fragmentary. It should be remembered, however, that the method of Biblical writers was in such matters selective. First Chronicles 1-9 is based on the Pentateuch and earlier historical books, but does not contain nearly all the names which those books record. Its author selected one here and another there. The genealogy of Jesus also in Matt. 1 omits the names of three Judean

¹⁷ Possibly, derived as suggested below for Irad, by the dropping of the *ṛ*.

¹⁸ Pilikam, if read Melikam, would by metathesis of the first two radicals and the loss of the last also give למך.

kings, Ahaziah, Jehoash and Amaziah; cf. Matt. 1 8 with 2 Kings 9-14.

The list of Berossos seems to have been derived from this list, but some changes and substitutions appear to have been made. Poebel has suggested¹⁹ that Alorus is Laluralim who is said to have been a king of Nippur²⁰. But the name Laluralim is glossed as *Zugagib*²¹, "scorpion", and Zugagib is one of the royal names of our list. Concerning Alaporus there is no plausible suggestion. It might possibly be a corruption of Galumum, but one would have to suppose that the *g* wore away and that every other consonant underwent phonetic change.

Amelon is the Semitic Babylonian "amelu", and could have originated as Enosh is supposed to have done above. Ammenon, the Semitic Babylonian *ummanu* is, like Kenan, a translation of Pilikam. Megalorus might be a corruption of *Mutu-šalal* like Mahalalel. Daōnos is clearly a corruption of Dumuzi. Euedorachos is, probably, a corruption of Enmeduranki, as pointed out above. Amempsinos has long been recognized as a corruption of *Amil-Sin*—a name not found in this list. Berossos substituted Ubara-tutu, the name of the father of Ut-napishtim in the version of the deluge from Nineveh, for the name of Lamech, in order to bring in the ancestry of Xisuthros. Xisuthros is Atrahasis, another name for Ut-napishtim and Ziugiddu. We have, then, for Berossos:—

Berossos		Intermediate form	Sumerian
1. Alorus	36,000 years	Laluralim	Zugagib
2. Alaparos	10,800 "	Alapuru(?)	Galumum(?)
3. Amelon	46,800 "	Amêlu	Enmenunna
4. Ammenon	43,200 "	Ummanu	Pelikam
5. Megalorus	64,800 "	Mutu-šalal-gan	Enmeirgan
6. Daonos	36,000 "		Dumuzi
7. Euedorachos	64,880 "	Enmeduranki	Etana
8. Amempsinos	36,000 "	Amil-Sin	
9. Opertes	28,800 "	Ubaratutu	
10. Xisuthros	64,800 "	Atra-hasis	Ziugiddu

¹⁹ *Historical Texts*, p. 42.

²⁰ Rawlinson's *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, V, 47, 5 b.

²¹ Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, V, 44, 17 b; cf. Meissner, *Seltene assyrische*

It is clear from this comparison that the priestly document of Genesis is independent of Berossos, and that in so far as the names in this new Sumerian list afford the source of both, Genesis stands nearer to the source than Berossos does. Berossos, moreover, has greatly exaggerated the number of years of each reign.

The antiquity of this tradition is attested by the fact that the tablet containing this list appears to have been written in the 156th year of the dynasty of Nisin, or in 2170 B. C.

But how does this Sumerian material compare with the J material of Gen. 2-4? It has long been recognized that the Cainite genealogy of J is probably the P genealogy in another form.

It is clear that Ademê of the Sumerian list could easily become "the man" (הָאָדָם) of J. Abel, who was a keeper of sheep, and was murdered, might well be Etana the shepherd, who went to heaven. The words SIBA LU, "the shepherd who", which in the Sumerian follow the name Etana, would, when combined, give the Hebrew הֶבֶל, if the *s*, which in Hebrew would become שׁ were thinned to a ה as the שׁ of the *shaphel* is in the Hebrew *hiphêl*²². Cain, which is in Hebrew another form of Kenan, would also be a translation of Pilikam. Enoch was probably derived from ANU-KU or AN-KI as above. Irad (עִירָד) corresponds to Jared of the other list and probably has some connection with Dumuzi. Is it a transfer from the Sumerian of the last two syllables of ZI-IR-TU²³,

Ideogramme, No. 6945. It is also said that the Semitic name of this king was Tabu-utul-bel. He is celebrated in the poems on the Babylonian Job; see Jastrow in this *JOURNAL*, XXV, 135 f., and Barton, *Commentary on Job*, p. 4 f.

²² Langdon, *Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of man*, p. 56, suggests that Abel is the Sumerian *Abu*, a patron of pastures and flocks. It is, however, more difficult to account for the addition of an *l* to *Abu* than for the change of *s* to ה. As the names of the other antediluvian patriarchs suggested by Langdon do not at all correspond to those in Genesis, the line of derivation suggested above seems preferable.

²³ See Rawlinson's *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, II, 59, rev. 9, and Zimmern's *Der Babylonische Gott Tamûz*, p. 13.

mother of Tammuz, or of IR-DA, "with tears"? In either case a prosthetic ע has been added as in עשתי²⁴. Weeping was one of the characteristic features of the worship of Tammuz. Mahujael (מחויאל) is probably a corruption of Mutu-el. Lamech and Noah are the same as in the P list.

The result for J is:

Hebrew	Semitic Babylonian	Sumerian
האדם		Ademê
Abel		siba lù (Etana)
Cain	Ina-uzni-erešu (or ummanu)	Pilikam
Enoch		an-ku or an-ki (Etana)
Irād		ir-da or ir-tu (Dumuzi)
Mehujael	Mutu-el	Enmenunna
Methusalah	Mutu-ša-el	Meskingashir
Lamech		Melamkish

If this analysis is correct the P document is in closer agreement, so far as the names are concerned, with the Babylonian original than the J document is. This is only what we should expect. The tradition must have reached J in an oral form. P was, perhaps, written in Babylonia where less confusion in the names might well be expected. P, with his taste for chronology, also seized eagerly on the numbers.

That Etana, according to this analysis, appears twice in the line of Cain is, perhaps, in accordance with the Sumerian list itself, for it is quite possible that in that list Lugal-banda is but Etana in another form. Etana is called a shepherd, and in the Etana myth the king whom Ishtar placed in control is also called a shepherd. Jastrow has conjectured that the king and Etana were the same²⁵. Lugal-banda means the "prudent king", and in the Sumerian business documents a *nu-banda* is a kind of over-shepherd. It is quite possible that in the Babylonian list, itself, Lugal-banda is only Etana under another form. In this case the duplication is much older than the J document.

²⁴ עיר may be a corrupt enlargement of יר.

²⁵ See *JAOS.*, XXX, 123.

The J document, however, like the Babylonian original, neither betrays a consciousness of a flood, nor brings its hero into the list of patriarchs.

It was noted above that this list begins with animal names, and that the first of the human names is Aripî or Ademê. Resolved into its constituent ideograms this name becomes *amîlu-maḥaṣu-uzni*, "man of destructive intelligence". He is followed by Etana, the shepherd; he, by Pilikam, "with intelligence to build". It is an interesting coincidence that this succession predicates an evolution not unlike that formulated by modern science—first the long reign of animal life, then the successive periods of hunting, of herding, and of settled workers in metal!